

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CANBER 06018 260804Z

ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 FEA-01 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-06

SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 NRC-05

/125 W

-----066081 260858Z /10

R 260710Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1199

INFO AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

ERDA HQ GERMANTOWN

ERDA HQ WASHINGTON

AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL PERTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 6018

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EMIN, ENRG, AS

SUBJECT: ALP OPPOSITION TO GOA DECISION TO MINE AND EXPORT
URANIUM

REF: CANBERRA 5991 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: AS EXPECTED, THE FEDERAL LABOR CAUCUS ON AUGUST
25 TOOK A STRONG STAND IN OPPOSITION TO THE GOA'S DECISION
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CANBER 06018 260804Z

TO GO AHEAD WITH URANIUM MINING AND EXPORT. THE LABOR
CAUCUS CLAIMED THAT IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDS WERE LACKING IN
THE GOA'S PLANS AND THAT MORE TIME WAS NEEDED FOR PUBLIC
DEBATE. THE CAUCUS SPECIFICALLY CHARGED THAT CUSTOMER
COUNTRIES WOULD STILL BE ABLE TO DIVERT AUSTRALIAN URANIUM
TO MILITARY NUCLEAR USES. END SUMMARY.

2. TOM UREN, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION AND STRONG-EST PARLIAMENTARY OPPONENT OF URANIUM EXPLOITATION, WARNED THE URANIUM MINING COMPANIES THAT "IF YOU GO AHEAD AND SINK YOUR \$250 MILLION OR SO IN URANIUM MINING, IN DEFIANCE OF LABOR POLICY, THE DON'T EXPECT ANY MERCY FROM THE NEXT LABOR GOVERNMENT." OPPOSITION LEADER GOUGH WHITLAM, REACHING THE HEIGHTS OF HYPERBOLE, SAID THAT THE GOA'S DECISION WAS COMPARABLE ON A GLOBAL SCALE TO THE MARKETING OF THALIDOMIDE. PRESIDENT OF THE ACTU BOB HAWKE, WHO FAVORS EVENTUAL AUSTRALIAN MINING AND EXPORT OF URANIUMPN ALSO ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION SAYING THAT THE GOVERNXWNT SHOULD HOLD A REFERENDUM TO DETERMINE PEOPLES' VIEWS. SHADOW MINISTER FOR MINERALS AND ENERGY KEATING, TERMING THE DECISION A "TRIUMPH OF GREED OVER REASON," CRITICIZED THE GOA ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT DID NOT ALLOW ADEQUATE TIME FOR PUBLIC DEBATE, EVEN THOUGH HE TOO FAVORS EXPLOITATION OF AUSTRALIAN URANIUM.

3. IT IS CLEAR THAT URANIUM WILL BE THE KEY ISSUE IN THE

ACTU NATIONAL CONFERENCE, WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE IN SYDNEY SEPTEMBER 12-16. IN SHORT, THE ACTU WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER TO GIVE INDUSTRIAL MUSCLE TO THE ALP DECISION AT PERTH (SEE CANBERRA 4889) WHICH BOUND THE ALP TO A MORATORIUM ON THE MINING AND EXPORT OF URANIUM FOR NEW CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CANBER 06018 260804Z

PROJECTS, AND FURTHER BOUND THE ALP TO "REPUDIATE ANY COMMITMENT OF A NON-LABOR GOVERNMENT TO THE MINING, PROCESSING, OR EXPORT OF AUSTRALIA'S URANIUM."

4. AUSTRALIAN UNIONS ARE DEEPLY DIVIDED OVER THE URANIUM ISSUE AS IS THE ALP GENERALLY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE AUSTRALIAN RAILWAYS UNION HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION DID NOT ALTER THE UNION'S "STRONG AND CONTINUING RESOLVE TO PREVENT THE MINING AND EXPORT OF URANIUM," WHILE THE AUSTRALIAN WORKERS UNION SAID THAT IT WAS ITS POLICY THAT MINING AND EXPORT OF URANIUM SHOULD GO AHEAD, NOTING THAT ABOUT 70 PERCENT OF THE WORK FORCE AT THE MARY KATHLEEN URANIUM MINE IN QUEENSLAND BELONGED TO THE AWU. THERE IS ALO INTRA-UNION DISPUTE, E.G., THE DOCKWOEKERS IN BRISBANE HAVE AGREED TO LOAD URANIUM TO HONOJREXISTING CONTRACTS, WHILE THE HEAD OF THE DOCKWORKERS IN MELBOURNE HAS BLOCKED IT. THE POSITION THAT THE ACTU WILL TAKE IS UNCLEAR. THERE ARE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF WORKERS WHO STAND TO GAIN EMPLOYMENT THROUGH URANIUM DEVELOPMENT WHO HAVE CALLED FOR MODERATION AND OBEDIENCE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY. THERE ARE OTHERS WHO ARE EQUALLY STRONGLY OPPOSED ON

IDEOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDS.

5. IT IS CLEAR THAT PM FRASER HAS THE ALP OFF BALANCE WITH HIS URANIUM POLICY. FRASER'S LINE IS THAT SHOULD AUSTRALIA NOT SHIP URANIUM THIS WOULD: (A) DENY AUSTRALIA AN EFFECTIVE VOICE IN STRENGTHENING SAFE-GUARDS AND NON-PROLIFERATION MEASURES; (B) ACCELERATE MOVES TO PLUTONIUM WITH RESULTANT RISKS OF PROLIFERATION; (C) BE UNFAIR TO THE WORLD'S ENERGY-POOR COUNTRIES, AMONG WHICH ARE AUSTRALIA'S MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS; AND (D) DENY AUSTRALIA SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC BENEFITS. FRASER CAN BE EXPECTED TO USE THIS AS AN EVENTUAL ELECTION ISSUE CLAIMING THAT HIS PARTY IS THE PARTY OF RESPONSIBILITY AND THAT THE ALP IS UNREALISTIC, IRRESPONSIBLE, AND UNCARING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CANBER 06018 260804Z

OF AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT. MANY MODERATE LEADERS OF THE ALP PRIVATELY ADMIT THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IS THE POPULAR POLICY. PUBLIC OPINION POLLS BEAR THIS OUT. THIS IS WHY HAWKE, ALP N.S.W. LEADER JOHN DUCKER, AND OTHER ALP MODERATES WILL PROBABLY PUSH FOR A FULL NATIONAL DEBATE, FOLLOWED BY A REFERENDUM WHICH WOULD PRESUMABLY FAVOR URANIUM EXPLOITATION, AND THUS PERMIT THE ALP TO MODERATE ITS GENERALLY UNPOPULAR STAND. HOWEVER, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT FRASER WOULD AGREE TO A REFERENDUM-- HE DOESN'T LIKE REFERENDUMS, HE BELIEVES A GOVERNMENT SHOULD GOVERN, AND HE APPRECIATES HOW TROUBLED THE ALP IS OVER THIS ISSUE--UNLESS HE IS EVENTUALLY PERSUADED THAT LABOR'S ATTITUDE WILL HAVE A DETERMINING DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON OVERSEAS INVESTMENT. ALSTON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPORTS, URANIUM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 26-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CANBER06018
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770308-1256
Format: TEL
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770820/aaaaaqh.tel
Line Count: 150
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f57ae852-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 CANBERRA 5991
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Jul-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1477029
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALP OPPOSITION TO GOA DECISION TO MINE AND EXPORT URANIUM
TAGS: EMIN, ENRG, AS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f57ae852-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009